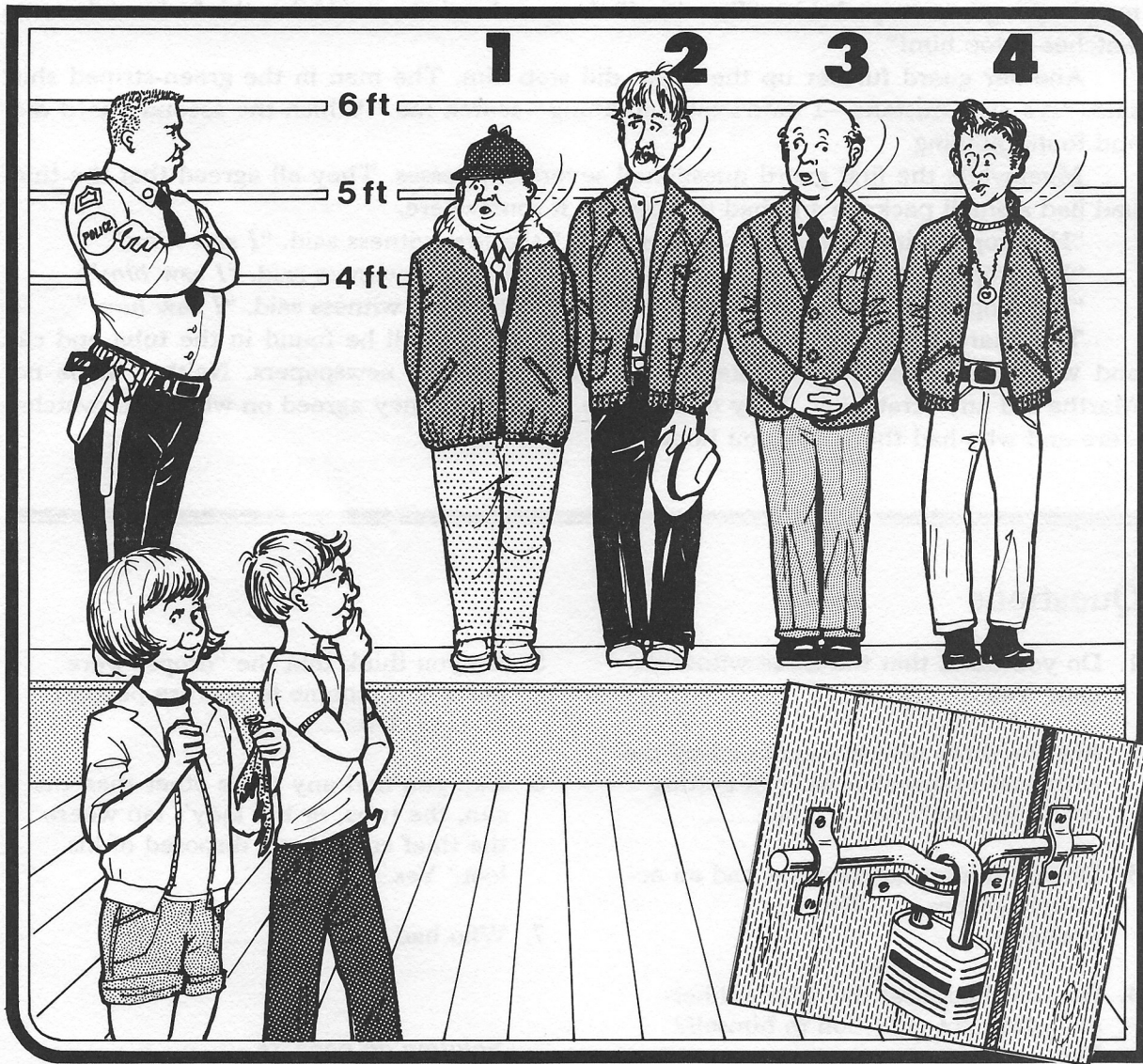


THE BIG BANG



Whiz McGonnigle tried out for a part in a school play and was turned down. He was no actor. He was almost home on the school bus and about to get off, when through the window he saw somebody in a red jacket fiddling with the padlock of the shed where he kept his new, fifteen-speed bicycle that Minnie Rahrah had given him. Whiz knew he had locked the shed before he went to school that morning.

The man seemed to be having trouble with the padlock, but when Whiz jumped off the bus and yelled (he shouldn't have), the man got on a bike that was lying in the high grass and rode off. Whiz was almost positive that it was *his* new bike. Angry and excited, he ran to the house and shouted out the news of the theft.

Mr. McGonnigle called the police at once, who rounded up four men with red jackets and called back and asked Whiz to come to the police station to identify the thief. Whiz had been too far away for that, but he kept wondering why the thief had had so much trouble with the padlock.

Before going to the police station with his father and Martha, Whiz gave Martha a balloon. "Blow it up," he said, "and stick a pin in it when I scratch my nose at the police station."

The sketch shows the scene at the police station a moment after the loud bang when Martha did her balloon act. Whiz, overjoyed that his idea had worked, pointed to one of the men and said, "Him. He's the thief."

Whom did he point out and why?

Questions

1. Do you think that the thief had unlocked the shed? Yes _____ No _____
2. Did all the men turn instinctively at the bang of the burst balloon? Yes _____ No _____
3. Do you think that the thief would look guilty? Yes _____ No _____
4. Can you see anything different in the glances of the three men? Yes _____ No _____
5. Would a one-eyed person have trouble with the lock? Yes _____ No _____
6. Was it important for the thief to relock the shed? Yes _____ No _____
7. Which of the four men stole the bike?

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